RELIGION

Religious matters occupy but a minor place in Havasupai life. 771 ●
Ceremonialism is meager and interest in the supernatural is neither ex- [796]
tensive nor developed in systematic form.

The paragraphs which follow express religious notions as they are
known to a layman. It is regrettable that it was not possible to obtain [124]
the viewpoint of the shaman. Of the two living at the time of my visits,
one died during the second winter; the other is quite deaf.

Souls, Spirits and Shamanism

Each human has a soul in his heart; the word, *yuwaflʸ*, refers to both 774
soul and heart. It leaves his body at death, but not when he dreams or
lies unconscious (*k'édjĭmpik*, a little dead). More explicitly, when a
man dreams that he is in a foreign land, he sees (or feels) his fleshly
self as actor, not his soul. To be sure when he wakes he is lying where he
fell asleep, he is fully aware that he has been dreaming, yet he offers no
explanation why others saw his slumbering form when he thought him-
self in another place.

The soul of a dead man may appear as a ghost (*ămĭyᵉ*[1]); this is short 775
and like a shadow. Shamans alone commonly see ghosts, or rather, their [787]
familiar spirits seek them out at night and report their doings, yet others
may see them. When a ghost appears to a man it is a portent that a
relative will soon die, or else it is to cause the man himself to sicken.
Ghosts are said always to be malignant; a man who heard and saw one
would sicken that very day and fail fast. People are afraid to go about [769]
alone at night, especially near the burial ground, which at any time is
dangerous, for fear ghosts will frighten or seize them. Yet the
following instances show mere sight or contact is not in itself harmful.

Susie saw one near her camp one night. He looked like an ordinary mortal; he was bare-headed. He passed on down the canyon. In the morning, the whole family examined the spot but found no footprints.

Arthur saw a ghost in the brush at the head of the creek. He looked like a man, except that his head was much larger.

Pete also saw one. He met him near dawn in Lee Canyon. The ghost said that he wanted Pete to dismount and sit down to talk with him, so he did so. Pete nodded and fell into a doze. When it was nearly daylight, the ghost said, "It is light now; let us go," and he went ahead. When the ghost was twenty feet away, Pete thought he would keep up with him and talk, but the faster he whipped his horse, the more the ghost drew away from him. The ghost led him along a trail following a ledge that

[1] The word *kwĕdjĭddĭd* was also given for ghost in an association test.

3:James T-5 (ca. 1900) 1903
NT14 Plateau Yumans NT14
Havasupai

CHAPTER XVI

THE HAVASUPAIS' RELIGIOUS DANCES AND BELIEFS

•771 THE Havasupais do not occupy a high place in the scale of religious life. They are very different from the Hopis and Navahoes. They have few ceremonies, few prayers, and few ideas connected with the world of spirits. If evil comes upon them they seek to propitiate the power that caused it. They dance and pray. But there is no system, no recurrence of elaborate ceremonials year after year. Indeed, the only regular dance that I have personally seen is that of the annual harvest, and that is occasionally omitted. The [755] Sick Dance, as its name implies, is for the purpose of healing the sick.

776 On the second night of my first visit to the Havasupais my companions and I were invited by Hotouta to [574] accompany him to one of these harvest thanksgiving dances. It was a wild and fantastic scene. Gathered together in a circular enclosure, the fence made of willow poles bound together with withes of the same tree, were between one hundred and two hundred Indians of both sexes in any and all manner of dress and undress. Three or four bonfires added to the weirdness by throwing peculiar lights and shadows upon the countenances of those present. At times there was a silence which became almost solemn in its intensity, and then

Havasupai Reservation includes about 300 acres of cultivable land. Asahel Perry, Indian Service extension agent, opined that in 1958 between 80 and 100 acres was under cultivation. A sizeable proportion of the arable acreage is not utilized due to the small size of individual plots. Almost always a family's holding consists of several patches of land scattered in different parts of the canyon, a consequence of the manner in which land is inherited or is distributed as need arises. Fences and ditches on the periphery of each field occupy a strip of ground about 3 ft. in width. Attempts to persuade tribal members to throw individual plots into a tribal cooperative farming program met with very limited success and the project was abandoned. Removal of fences to facilitate use of modern farm methods no doubt suggests to land owners a possible loss of claim to land or reduction in acreage. 311 [657]

Land ownership is a source of frequent controversy between Havasupai individuals. The Indian Service recognizes no clear legal title of an individual to a plot of land, considering instead that an individual has a right to use the land which it regards as tribally owned. On the other hand, the Indian Service recognizes individual ownership of houses on the land. 423 [578]

Five Havasupai individuals have accepted employment under the Indian Service Relocation Program. Three men, two of them unmarried, returned to the reservation within a short time. One man, a family head, has now been employed in a Los Angeles furniture factory for three years. An unmarried woman, in hospital work for 18 months, probably will continue on relocation; she had been previously employed off the reservation for approximately six years. 657

Religion

Havasupai religion finds expression in the songs and simple ritual of the sweat bath, in mythology, and in a body of traditional folk beliefs, as it does also in funeral customs and in shamanistic practices. Although religious ideology and ceremony are weakly developed, orientation toward the natural world and explanation of certain phenomena pertaining to man and his environment is made primarily in religious terms. 771

Spier (1928, 289) classed the Havasupai with the Great Basin tribes in meagerness of religious development. He states that they resembled both the "Basin-Plateau and Californian peoples in relative prominence of the shaman, the acquisition of power through dreams, not visions, and an hereditary bias to shamanism." They resemble, he says, the Southwestern tribes only in their infrequent use of prayer plumes and in prayers for rain and crop fertility. Traditional killing of an unsuccessful shaman he likens to the practice of the lower Colorado tribes. 771 114 191

539 almost dark, she could see in the distance the outline of the moun-
773 tains of the San Francisco peaks and nearby to the north the Canyon of the Colorado and to the west the Canyon of the Havasu. The flood had lasted so long that Pu-keh-eh had grown to womanhood. Seeing the water gone, she came out and began to weave baskets and make pottery as her father had taught her before the flood. She was very lonely and longed for her father, but she had to live alone a long time in the dark dismal world.

Many months of darkness had passed but one morning the darkness began to disappear and in the east a faint brightness appeared. The maiden knew that the triumphant sun was coming to conquer the long night and bring light into the world. During the time of waiting for light the girl had a great longing for a child. But where was a father for her child? There wasn't a man in the world.

When the sun rose in the east she decided he should be the father of her child. She conceived and in the fullness of time bore a son whom she called the Son of the Sun.

As time passed she again longed for maternity. Later Pu-keh-eh had a daughter. When these two children grew up they married and thus became the progenitors of the human race. The Havasupai were created first, then the Apache, the Hualapai, the Hopi, the Paiute, and last the Navaho. Tochopa told them where they should live. The Havasupai and Apache were to stay in Cataract Canyon, the former on one side of the creek and the latter on the other side, and occupy the country east to the Little Colorado and south to the San Francisco mountains. The Hualapai were to remain in the country west of Cataract Canyon, the Navaho, and Hopi east of the Little Colorado, and the Paiute north of the Big Colorado.

For a long time the Havasupai and Apache lived together in peace, but one day an Apache man saw a beautiful Havasupai woman. He fell in love with her and longed to take her for his wife, but she was the wife of another. He finally called upon Hokomata, the wicked god, to help him. Hokomata, always glad to make trouble, told the Apache to pay no attention to the restrictions placed upon him by Tochopa, but to go to the home of the woman and kill her husband, then take her for his own wife. The Apache heeded this evil advice, killed the man and took the woman for his own. When the Havasupai discovered the crime that had been committed and the disgrace this Apache had brought upon them, they counselled together and decided to drive the Apaches from the Canyon. No longer should they be one people. They commanded the Apache people to leave, but the latter refused to move. The Havasupai then set upon them and drove them far to the south. Although they were originally brothers, there has been a feeling of enmity between them ever since.

771 Religion is only slightly developed and occupies but a minor place in Havasupai life. "Ceremonialism is meager and interest in the supernatural is neither comprehensive nor developed in systematic form."(1)
782 Prayers are addressed to the earth, sun, rocks, trees, wind, and water. When praying to the sun a man draws his hands down over his face as he blows to brush the evil away.

715 Every human has a soul in his heart which leaves his body at death,
774 but not when he dreams or is unconscious. The soul of the dead may
756 appear as a ghost; in a short dark form. Usually only *shamans* see ghosts, or rather, their familiar spirits pursue them at night and give
780 account of their conduct; occasionally others see them. If a ghost appears to a person it is an evil omen—a member of his family will soon die or he may meet with an accident. Ghosts are said always to be
775 forebearers of evil; anyone seeing or hearing one will immediately be-
769 come sick. Children and some older people are afraid to go about alone

(1) Spier, Havasupai Ethnography, p. 276.

/98 cont./

101 water; vasú, blue; and apá, man; and was first applied to them by the Walapai and other Yuman tribes, who had been impressed by the peculiarly transparent blue of the stream flowing through Cataract Canon. By several neighboring tribes and by early writers the Havasupai were called Coconinos, or Cohoninos. This is undoubtedly a Hopi word, for the Hopi still call them Kohónina, which, they say, is from kóhu, wood, and nína, kill, hence "Wood-killers," referring to the former Havasupai custom of breaking off limbs of trees for firewood with clubs. The name survives in that of Coconino county, Arizona.

[313]

133 and which makes life possible in the depths of the gorge, flows through the length of the little garden spot, then in a cataract leaps from the floor of the cañon to be caught in a pool below.

137 While the brink of the cañon lies in the high plateau region, the land of the piñon, cedar, and pine, the home of the Havasupai is in almost a subtropical spot that produces luxuriant

●771 vegetation with fruits of several kinds. Ask a Havasupai whence came these fruits and vegetables, and he will tell you, "God brought them, all but the figs." This frank expression as to the origin of his garden products reflects a Havasupai peculiarity. Ordinarily Indians will not mention their gods by name, but the Havasupai discuss them with the same familiarity that they would their neighbors. With them, as indeed with all Indians, everything animate and inanimate is of divine origin.

773 Havasupai mythology differs but slightly from that of the
197 parent stock, and the difference in language is dialectic only.
174 Notwithstanding the similarity in myth and language, the separa-
144 tion must have occurred at a very early date, for in their features the Havasupai bear little resemblance to the Yuma or the Mohave.

[142] They are below the average Indian in stature, while the Mohave and the Yuma are far above.

161 /99/ In 1903 the Havasupai numbered about 250, but in three years disease has diminished their population to 166. The

RELIGION

The General Character of Havasupai Religion

771 ●

[Spier (1928, 275, 289) has well, but briefly, discussed the position of supernatural beliefs in Havasupai culture. Religion was poorly developed; ceremonialism was meager except perhaps when it involved shamanistic practices. Some incipient borrowing was made from the Hopi in the use of prayers, masked dancers and prayer sticks; from the Southern Paiute in the acceptance of the 1890 ghost dance; and from the Mohave funeral rites. The concern with shamans and curing through spirits was typically Yuman, as were cremation, mourning ceremonies and fear of ghosts. The round dance undoubtedly was derived from the Great Basin. (See also Spier, 1929).] 771 177

Cosmology

The Havasupai believed that the world was flat and that the sky was a dome that came to meet the earth all around the edges. The middle of the world was at the San Francisco Peaks [the highest peaks in Arizona, north of Flagstaff, and visible from all parts of Havasupai territory except, of course, in the deep tributary gorges of Grand Canyon. This visibility accounts for the belief that the San Francisco Peaks are central in Havasupai world concepts even though, geographically, they are near the southeastern corner of their former range]. The earth, high in the middle and sloping away to the edges, was small, but the sky was large and very high. 772 [823]

Underground consisted of four levels, as did the sky. Shamans are reported to have seen these latter levels, which were inhabited by people with wings, sky people, mi ǎ°bǎ°djih. [756]

The Havasupai recognized six directions, including the zenith and nadir (Spier, 1928, 169). There existed a vague notion of an ocean to the west [probably learned from the Mohave who had traded with coastal people] 823 [174 177]

Of the neighboring tribes the Havasupai knew the Walapai, Hopi, Apache, Southern Paiute and Navajo. [An interesting denial of knowledge of the Yavapai perhaps results from the Havasupai consideration that, of all creatures, the Yavapai were farthest from a human category. Further, unless one makes specific separate inquiry, Havasupais often tend to equate the Yavapai and Apache. Tales of Apache raids in reality refer to Yavapai encounters.] They knew of Zuni and Acoma, but did not visit Zuni or farther east. Knowledge of these pueblos came to them through the Hopi. 101 186 177

he danced, and later saw it in the fire when the clothes were burned.

[The foregoing straightforward description of a comparatively recent Havasupai funeral was recorded with no attempt at interpretation by Smithson. The songs and dance steps all are of Mohave origin, adopted by the Havasupai through the Walapai. Yet, such ceremonies, as well as the annual mourning rite, continue to be a serious, deeply emotional part of Havasupai religion.]

Dances

[Spier (1928, 261-9) described three dance formations for the Havasupai: the round dance, more social than religious; masked dances, probably in imitation of Hopi kachina impersonations; and the Mohave version of the bear dance.]

Our informants confirmed the correctness of Spier's (1928, 261-5) description of the round dance, and we can add but little data. Most of the songs were those invented by Teyadjáva although others were learned from Navajos and Southern Paiutes. The favorites to this day are those of Teyadjáva and Gätágama. These are sung first and, if completed before morning, Paiute verses may be sung. Navajo songs are no longer part of the repertoire.

Certainly since at least the beginning of the 20th century (Iliff, 1954, 175; Spier, 1928, 261) the round dance has been identified with the so-called peach or harvest dance held late in August or early in September. There are some hints that at the time, the performance still contained a residue of ghost dance elements even though it probably antedates that nativistic movement (Spier, 1928, 266; James, 1903, 252-5). Apropos of this, an account in The Arizona Graphic (Anon., 1899), gave a brief note of the ceremony;

> "The Yava-Supais have an annual religious dance... and few white men have ever witnessed it. Superintendent McCowan [in 1899 at the Phoenix Indian School but in 1895 agent to the Havasupai] says he was a spectator at one of these ceremonies, but did not sit the programme through. The dance was seemingly interminable. The participants kept up a monotonous but energetic action, circling about a pole, to which was attached some 'medicine.' A chief kept spurring them on, and as they fell from exhaustion they were dragged from the ring and fresh dancers took their places."